

NRA HUNTER SAFETY HANDBOOK



NRA SAFETY SERIES

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

1600 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE • WASHINGTON 6, D. C.



PRICE 10c



The National Rifle Association of America

The NRA is a non-profit organization supported entirely by the membership fees of public spirited citizens and clubs. It is not a trade organization. Established in 1871, its membership roster has carried the names of many of America's outstanding diplomats, jurists, political and military leaders.

The objects of the Association are: to promote social welfare and public safety, law and order and the national defense; to educate and train citizens of good repute in the safe and efficient handling of small arms, and in the technique of design, production and group instruction; to increase the knowledge of small arms and promote efficiency in the use of such arms on the part of members of law enforcement agencies, of the armed forces, and of citizens who would be subject to service in the event of war; and generally to encourage the lawful ownership and use of small arms by citizens of good repute.

The NRA maintains a staff of technicians to advise members on problems of equipment and its use. It is the accepted source of authoritative information on shooting club organization and operation, range construction and procedures, firearms safety education, and basic marksmanship training. It provides extensive shooting programs for its members.

THE AMERICAN RIFLEMAN, devoted exclusively to guns and shooting, is the official journal of the NRA. It is accepted by sportsmen all over the world as the outstanding authority on guns, ammunition and shooting equipment, and methods for game and target shooting. THE RIFLEMAN is the shooting world's most quoted and re-printed publication.

The magazine is mailed, without additional charge, to senior members of the Association as a membership privilege. Special reduced subscription rates are offered to junior members. Individual senior membership in the NRA is open to American citizens 18 years of age or older. Junior membership is available to boys and girls who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. Full information on membership and on the organization and affiliation of either junior or senior shooting clubs may be had by writing to the National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

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THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

1600 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Foreword

Since its founding in 1871, the National Rifle Association of America has been vitally interested in the field of firearms safety education. It is convinced that the educational approach is the best method of reducing the number of gun accidents that happen in the hunting field. Records show that the majority of hunting accidents are the result of lack of knowledge or failure to apply such knowledge.

Instruction in marksmanship and the safe handling of firearms has been a prominent activity of the NRA for more than eighty-five years. The specific program of safety instruction for hunters began in New York State in 1949. In order to reduce hunting accidents a law was enacted which required that young hunters must complete a course of firearms safety instruction successfully before being eligible to buy their first hunting license. The instruction and testing of these applicants was to have been done by State Game Protectors. During the first year under the law it was apparent that there was more work than the protectors could handle. In 1950, the NRA was designated to give instruction and to issue the certificates required in the law. The instructors appointed by the NRA gave the training without pay. Many thousands of people have been trained and hunting accidents have been reduced.

Great interest in hunting safety has developed throughout the nation. Volunteer NRA Hunter Safety Instructors train young hunters in every state. A number of states now have legislation authorizing firearm safety training and others operate statewide programs of training without legislative stimulus. The program, begun in New York, was revised for nation-wide use in consultation with units of the National Education Association. It is designed for use in any community where public-spirited citizens want to reduce the possibility of hunting accidents. It is designed to benefit inexperienced hunters regardless of age. Its success depends on the sincere efforts of instructors and sponsors who are willing to volunteer their services.

The National Rifle Association is indebted to these individuals for their contribution to the preparation of this manual: Dr. A. E. Florio, Dr. J. Bertram Kessel, Dr. Julian W. Smith and Dr. Carl A. Troester of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation; Mr. R. C. Carlson, Mr. G. E. Damon, Dr. Paul E. Eliker and Mr. A. W. Mastin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals; Mr. Stanley Abercrombie, Mr. Gordon C. Graham, Dr. John W. Headley and Mr. Norman Key of the National Commission on Safety Education.

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SAFE HUNTING

The sport of hunting is an ancient and honorable activity. Nowadays few people get their food by hunting. It is a wholesome recreation . . . physically stimulating and full of thrills and excitement. The fun in hunting comes as much from enjoyment of nature and the satisfaction of handling guns skillfully as it does from getting a full bag.

More than fourteen million Americans buy hunting licenses every year. Some areas are crowded with hunters during the open seasons—and with more hunters afield the chance of accident is greater. Studies of the causes of hunting accidents show that they almost all can be avoided . . . avoided by a little care, a little knowledge, a little more preparation. It is the purpose of the National Rifle Association, through its Hunter Safety Course, to give instruction in safe hunting techniques, and to encourage the care that can eliminate a large percentage of accidents in the field.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The NRA Hunter Safety Course teaches proper gun handling in circumstances related to hunting. Basic information about ammunition and guns, especially as applied to their safe use, is included. Sportsmanship is stressed too, because safe hunting and sportsmanship go hand in hand. There is no intent to teach expert marksmanship. That is a separate subject requiring considerably more training and practice. The sole aim of this course is to give the hunter basic information which should enable him to avoid hunting accidents. The NRA wishes to spread the principles of safe hunting to as many people as possible. The more safe hunters there are . . . the better for all.

The course may be used by any reputable group for the purpose of teaching safe hunting practices. It is used in all states which have statewide Hunter Safety Programs and is used, as well, by many clubs and individuals.

It is also adaptable for use by those interested in bow hunting. A BOW HUNTING SUPPLEMENT to this Handbook is available from the NRA. The price is 10 cents.

KNOWLEDGE OF GUNS AND AMMUNITION

NAMES OF PARTS

Knowledge of gun safety logically begins with a study of how they operate. Different types of hunting guns have different parts, use different types of ammunition and are used differently. For instance, birdshot or buckshot fired from a shotgun, with its relatively short range, will do little harm to a person 400 yards away. A rifle, including a .22, can kill at the same—and much greater—distance. However, within range, a shotgun is just as dangerous as a rifle.

Statistics show that the majority of shooting accidents in the hunting field happen at short range so *all* guns—from the BB on up—must be used with the same concern for the principles of safety that apply to the most powerful.

Both rifles and shotguns are used in hunting. Basically they operate much the same mechanically. The major difference between rifles and shotguns is found inside the barrel. The shotgun barrel is relatively thin and its bore (inside surface) is smooth. It is often called a “smoothbore.” Rifle barrels have thicker walls and have spiral grooves in the bore. The grooves are called rifling. The rifling spins the bullet—keeping it point-first in flight and increasing accuracy and range.

The caliber of a rifle is normally determined by measuring the diameter of the bore from the top of a ridge of metal between rifling grooves to the top of the ridge opposite. Caliber is usually given in hundredths of an inch. For example, a .22 caliber rifle measures 22/100 of an inch between rifling ridges. Some calibers, such as .257, are identified by measuring the grooves instead of the ridges.

Shotguns are classified by gauge instead of caliber. For instance, a 16-gauge shotgun is one that has a barrel with inside diameter of such size that 16 lead balls of the same size would weight a pound. There is an exception to this general rule. The .410-gauge shotgun is designated by caliber measurement in thousandths of an inch.

TYPES OF GUNS

Types of shotguns and rifles are usually distinguished and named by their action design. Everyone is familiar with the rifle or shotgun into which a single cartridge or shell is loaded by hand. This is the single-shot. Both the double-barrel and over-and-under shotguns are just two single-shot guns joined together. Single-shot rifles are most always of the bolt-action type. Older models may

be of the lever-action type. Single-shot shotguns are most frequently of the hinge-action type.

Repeating rifles and shotguns include the lever-action, bolt-action, pump-action and semi-automatic or self-loading types. Operating the lever, bolt, or the pump handle extracts and ejects the empty shell, reloads a fresh shell into the chamber and cocks the gun.

The so-called automatics are actually semi-automatic or self-loading. The reloading is automatic but it is necessary to press the trigger for each shot. True automatics, such as machine guns, continue firing as long as the trigger is held back and the ammunition lasts. They are not legal arms in any state.

A Federal game law controls the use of all types of repeating shotguns. The Migratory Bird Act requires that magazines of such guns be plugged so they will hold only two shells. These, plus one shell in the chamber, limit the shooter to three shells at one loading. Many shotguns are made to fire more than three shells at one loading but the manufacturers usually furnish magazine plugs. Some states also ban the use of semi-automatic guns in hunting. Hunters who wish to use this type of gun should check the game laws of the state concerned to be sure it may be used legally.

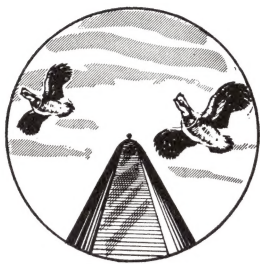
SIGHTS

Sights are very important attachments to the hunting gun, especially the rifle. Rifle sights may be put in three general classes: open sights; peep or aperture sights; and telescope sights.

Open sights are the most common and the simplest in construction. The popular combination of a metallic bead or post front sight and the V- or U-notched rear sight probably accounts for more than any other type. The peep sight provides greater accuracy and the ability to make finer adjustments. The front sight is the same as in the open sight, but the rear sight has a tiny peephole through which the shooter looks. The third type, the telescope, is the most satisfactory except under extremely bad weather conditions. Its enlargement of the target is a real help to the hunter. Another great advantage of the telescope sight is that the hunter does not have to align front and rear sights for a shot. He looks through the sight, sets the cross hairs or post on the spot he wants to hit, and fires.

Sights are not nearly as important to the shotgun shooter. He is

not trying to aim with the same pinpoint accuracy as the rifle shooter because the pellets in a shot charge spread as they go through the air. Usually the sight on a shotgun is a single round bead on top of the barrel near the muzzle. Some shotguns have a second smaller bead about halfway back on the barrel.



SAFETIES

The safety is a most important device on both shotgun and rifle. It is located so the trigger hand may operate it easily. It blocks the action of the gun so that it cannot be fired when the safety latch or button is in the "on" position. The safety should be "on" at all times when the gun is loaded and released only immediately before the shot. However—a good word of caution—safeties are mechanical devices and sometimes fail to work because of wear or some other reason. No hunter should depend wholly on the safety to prevent accidental firing. The safety is meant only to supplement proper gun handling.

CLEANING

Every hunter should keep his gun clean, free of rust and in good working order. All moving parts should be kept lightly oiled. The hunter should make only the most minor repairs himself. All others should be made by a competent gunsmith. Above all, the trigger pull should not be changed except by an expert. So-called "hair-triggers" are extremely dangerous. No hunting gun should have a light trigger.

The barrel of a gun should be kept clean and free of obstructions of all kinds—snow, mud, heavy grease, cleaning materials or other debris. Guns fired with an obstruction in the barrel can cause serious injury or, at least, extensive damage to the gun.

AMMUNITION

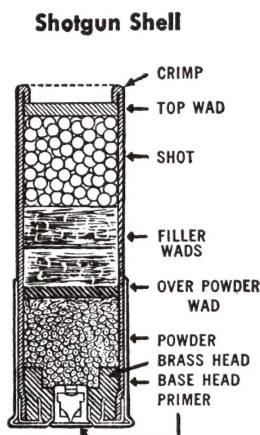
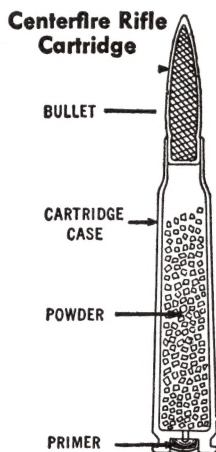
There is quite a difference in the appearance of rifle and shotgun ammunition, but each has essentially the same component parts. The shotgun shell has primer, gun powder, wads and shot pellets inside a paper tube with a brass base. The rifle cartridge has a primer, powder and a single bullet in a metal case.

Cartridges for the .22 caliber rifle have the priming compound in the rim of the cartridge case and are called rimfire cartridges. Other rifle cartridges have the priming compound in a little metal cup in the center of the base of the case and are called center fire.

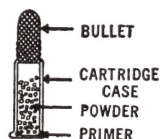
Shotgun ammunition used in hunting falls into three general categories: small, or bird shot; large, or buck shot; rifled slug. Selection of the size shot and the weight of the charge should be made based on the game being hunted. Use of the slug is perfectly safe in any modern shotgun but its accuracy increases as choke decreases. Use of certain types of ammunition is restricted in some states. The wise hunter will make certain that the type of ammunition he plans to use is legal in the state in which he is hunting.

Shotgun pellets travel about 1,100 feet per second and have a maximum range of only a few hundred yards. A rifle bullet may travel as fast as 3,000 feet per second and has a range of from one to several miles.

Care in the selection of ammunition is highly important. The specifications on the ammunition box should be examined care-



**Rimfire Cartridge
(.22 cal.)**



fully and only ammunition designed for the gun in use should be carried on the hunt. Serious accidents have occurred when an excited hunter slips a 20-gauge shell into his 12-gauge shotgun. The 20-gauge shell slides forward in the chamber and will not fire. However, when he puts a 12-gauge shell into the chamber behind it and fires, real trouble results. The hunter who makes this mistake is lucky if the only casualty is a ruined gun. Armed with a 12-gauge shotgun, he should carry only 12-gauge ammunition. Only the correct ammunition for the gun in use should be carried.

In loading the gun the cartridge or shell is placed in the chamber at the breech end of the barrel. The chamber is made to fit the cartridge or shell for which the gun was designed. If it seems too loose or too tight it should not be used.

PROPER GUN HANDLING

PRIMARY RULES

Handling a gun properly is the real key to hunting safety. A majority of all gun accidents can be avoided if the simple safety principles of holding and pointing a gun are observed. Three primary rules will eliminate most of these tragedies.

1. TREAT EVERY GUN AS IF IT WERE LOADED.

"I didn't know it was loaded" is never an acceptable excuse. The safe gun-handler checks to make sure by opening the action and never takes the word of anyone as to its condition.

2. ALWAYS POINT THE MUZZLE IN A SAFE DIRECTION.

The true gun expert is easy to spot by the way he handles a gun. He never allows the muzzle to point at any person—himself or any member of his party. And he will insist that everyone else follow the same rule.

3. BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET.

The good hunter carefully identifies his target before he fires. He never shoots at a sound, a patch of color or at any object until he has had a full view of his game. He will pass up an outstanding trophy rather than take the slightest risk of being wrong.

AFIELD

There are several ways to carry a gun so that it is never a threat to other hunters yet is ready for instant use. One good position is to grip the small of the stock in the trigger hand and cradle the barrel in the crook of the other arm. Another carry, and probably the best because it gives better control of the muzzle, is to hold the fore end in one hand and the small of the stock in the other. The familiar shoulder carry is also used.

In *all* carries the standard rules apply:

1. SAFETY "ON".
2. FINGER OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.
3. MUZZLE IN A SAFE DIRECTION, AND UNDER CONTROL.

As an example, if three hunters are walking in a single file, the one in the lead may have his gun pointed ahead of him—but never over his shoulder. The one in the middle must have his gun pointed to the side but the man in the rear would have a safe carry if his gun was pointing either to the side or rear. If the same men are walking abreast, the men at the sides may carry their guns pointing either to the side away from their party or to the front while the man in the center should keep his pointing to the front.

TRANSPORTING

Guns should be unloaded before being put in a car. It is even better to case them as well. Guns being put into a boat should also be unloaded and the actions opened as an additional precaution. Hunters stopping for *any* purpose should unload and open their guns. Loaded guns should never be taken into a cabin or dwelling. Guns should be unloaded before trying to walk a log or any time the footing is very bad. No safe hunter *ever*



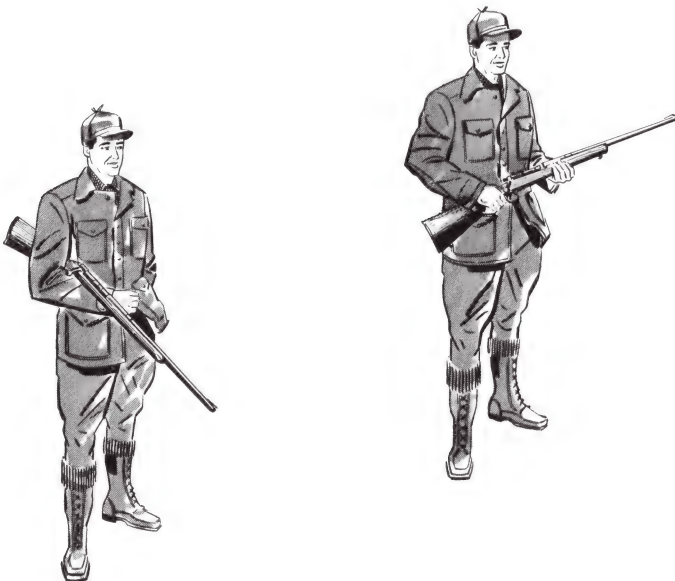
runs with a loaded gun, nor does he ever use his gun to flush or club game.

The gun should be unloaded before attempting to climb a fence. After it is unloaded it should be placed on the other side of the fence with the muzzle pointed away from the point where the hunter will climb over.

STORING

Guns and ammunition are always stored away when not in use. Storing means keeping guns in a rack, box or other place where it cannot be knocked around or used as a toy by small children. The ammunition is stored in a different place. The gun is unloaded before it is brought into the house and is stored that way.

Guns and ammunition should be in locked storage when not in use—but in separate places. The principle of safe storage is simply that it should never be possible for the gun to fire accidentally or for the wrong person to get gun and ammunition at the same time.

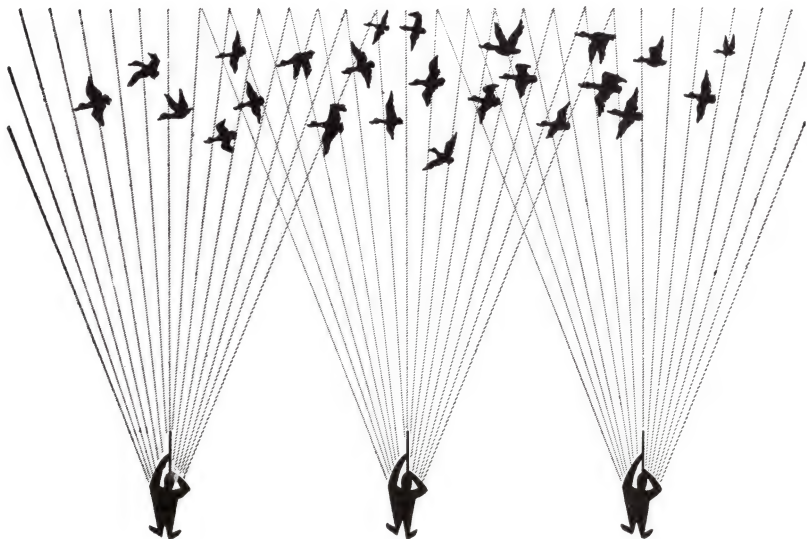


SAFE HUNTING

ZONE OF FIRE

Parties hunting together should agree beforehand on the area each shooter will cover. This is particularly true of groups hunting birds, rabbits or other small game. Take our three hunters again, this time on a hunt for ringneck pheasants. The hunter in the center will take all "going away" birds flushed in the middle half of the line. The other hunters will shoot at all birds flying to their respective sides of the line. Should a bird turn and fly back across the line of hunters it is best if they all hold their fire, especially if the bird is low. The same is true of a rabbit scurrying back between two of the hunters. No hunter, even when he is following game with his gun should allow it to point at one of his companions. Again—it is far better to pass up a shot than to be forever sorry it was taken.

In hunting larger game, where the party separates over a wide area, equal care should be taken to know where each hunter is going to be. In some states shotguns are the only firearms allowed in hunting deer and this makes extra care necessary since it tends to concentrate the deer hunters in an even smaller area. The hunter is less likely to mistake a man for a deer under any circumstances when he knows a man is there.



TARGET IDENTIFICATION

The need for being sure of the target cannot be overemphasized. A hunter should fire only when he has *positively* identified his target as legal game and has assured himself that no humans or domestic animals are in the zone of fire. Many hunters shoot too quickly anyway. Deliberateness will pay off double—better shooting and, more important yet, *positive* identification will be possible.

A good rule to follow is that the target is not certain until the whole animal or bird has been visible immediately before the shot.

SELF-CONTROL

A hunter naturally focusses on getting game. Unless he is an experienced woodsman, and perhaps even then, he is under strong emotional stress. All his senses are turned to locating and bagging game. Each rustle of leaves, each snapping twig or the slightest movement seen from the corner of his eye may catch the full intensity of his heightened awareness. Unless he holds himself in check very deliberately he may shoot at the slightest movement or sound. To be a good hunter he must have complete control of himself.

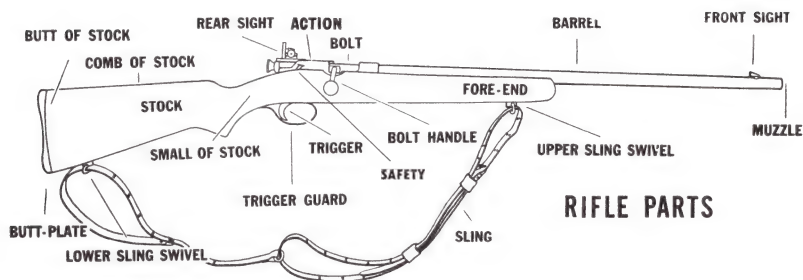
Self-control comes with practice. By handling his gun properly at all times and waiting actually to see the game he will train himself to habitual control. These good habits, once established, will take over naturally when he is in the grip of excitement at an anticipated shot. Self-control is largely acquired. It should be practiced at all times in the hunting field.

ACCURACY

The ability to shoot with reasonable accuracy is another characteristic of the good hunter. Safety depends on the ability to hit close enough to the target so everyone in the neighborhood isn't in danger. Indiscriminate shots in the general direction of the target are dangerous and certainly mark the novice. The hunter's knowledge of his own ability should be such that it would tell him when a shot is impossible or the clean killing of game improbable.

Self-control and accuracy go hand-in-hand. The desire for accuracy makes for control and is impossible without it. Good sportsmanship depends on the accuracy necessary to make clean kills. No real sportsman wants to wound game and have it die a lingering death miles away. Every hunter should learn the vital spots in the game he hunts and shoot for them—and be able to shoot accurately enough to hit them.

THE RIFLE



NAMES OF PARTS

The stock, usually of wood, serves as the handle with which the shooter holds the rifle to his shoulder or carries it.

The barrel is the metal tube through which the bullet is propelled toward the target.

The action is made up of the parts that load and fire the rifle.

Each of the assemblies named above is made up of several parts.

AIMING

An understanding of proper aiming is basic to shooting accurately. Lining up sights and target carefully are essential in the rifle. The sight picture illustrations on page 4 should be studied carefully. It should be noted that with open sights the top of the front sight is exactly centered and in line with the top of the rear sight notch. When the shooter looks through the circle in a rear peep or aperture sight, the top of the front sight should be in the exact center of the peep hole.

Most hunters line up their sights in such a way that the point they wish to hit sits exactly on top of the front sight. There are other ways to line up the sights but in the method mentioned above the front sight does not cover the target. Whatever method is used, it is important that the gun be "sighted-in" using the same method.

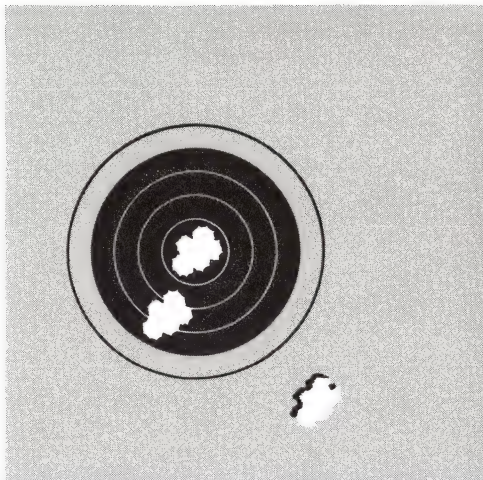
Aiming with the telescope sight is simple. The bullet hits where the hairs cross if the rifle is properly sighted-in. If the scope has a post or picket insert or reticle it is aimed as it would be with an ordinary post front sight.

SIGHTING-IN

Every hunter should sight-in his gun before hunting. It will assure him that his shot will go where he wants it to go.

Sighting-in simply means firing shots and adjusting sights until the shots hit the center of the target. The best possible place to sight-in is a regular rifle range but when that is not possible an earth bank free of stones is all right. A paper target or some other object of suitable size should be placed against this safe backstop. It is best to start out at fairly close range if the setting of the sights is unknown. The first shots should be made in prone position or, if it is available, by use of some sort of steady support. After about five shots the target should be examined and rear sight adjustment made to bring the group to the center of the target. The rear sight should be moved in the same direction the bullet holes are to be moved . . . this is the rule of sight adjustment. The distance or range should finally be increased to that suitable for the game which is to be hunted.

Generally speaking, a high-powered rifle for deer hunting would be sighted-in for 150 or 200 yards—perhaps a little more for open country. A .22 rifle for squirrel hunting might be sighted-in for 35 to 50 yards.



POSITION

The target shooting rifleman has several standard positions: prone, sitting, kneeling and standing. The hunter often has no time to choose his position and must fire as he is. He should be familiar with all the positions, however, and use the best one under the circumstances. The pictures show the positions and practice will enable the hunter to assume them quickly.

When possible, a fallen tree or other solid support may be used. The rifle should be supported by the arm. The rifle should not rest directly on the support.



PRONE



SITTING



KNEELING

STANDING

TRIGGER SQUEEZE

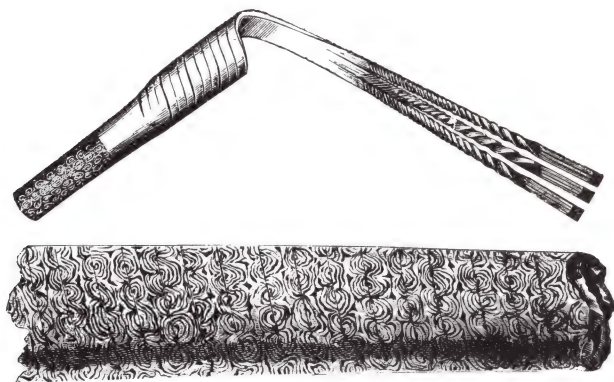
Provided the sights are properly aligned, the way the trigger is moved affects accuracy more than any other factor. Correct trigger squeeze involves a steady pressure until the gun fires. Yanking the trigger or quick clenching of the whole hand can move the gun enough to send the shot far from the target. The shooter must also control his breathing for the few seconds during aiming and firing in order that the movement involved does not throw the shot wide. Practice will make this holding of the breath and proper trigger squeeze habitual. Both are essential to good rifle shooting.

THE SHOTGUN

DAMASCUS BARRELS

Until about 1900 most shotgun barrels were made of alternating iron and steel ribbons, twisted and welded together. Such barrels, called Damascus, twist or laminated, are softer than present-day barrels of rolled or drawn steel and are not so well adapted for the pressures given by smokeless shotgun powders. In addition, it must be remembered that most guns 50 to 80 years old are not as well designed as those made recently. Lastly, their very age makes it unlikely they still have their original strength.

For these reasons, firing of modern smokeless shotgun ammunition in guns with Damascus barrels can be dangerous—and the most frequent point of rupture under the higher pressure load is close to the breech.



NAMES OF PARTS

The stock, usually of wood, serves as the handle with which the shooter holds the shotgun to his shoulder or carries it.

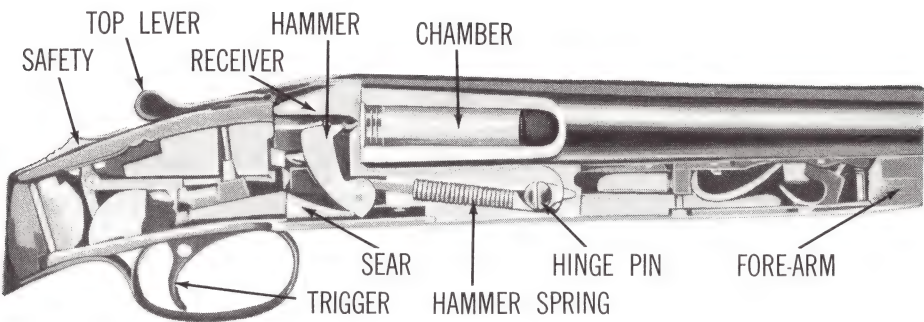
The barrel is the metal tube through which the shot pellets are propelled toward the target.

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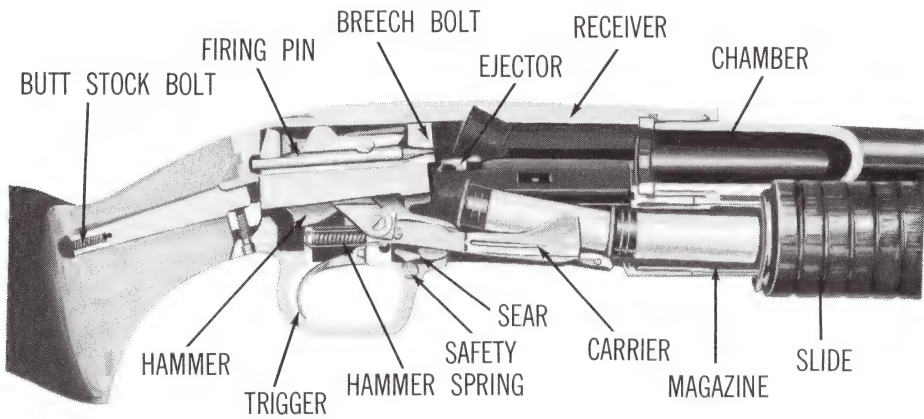
Each of the assemblies named above is made up of several parts.

Detailed illustrations appear on the next page.

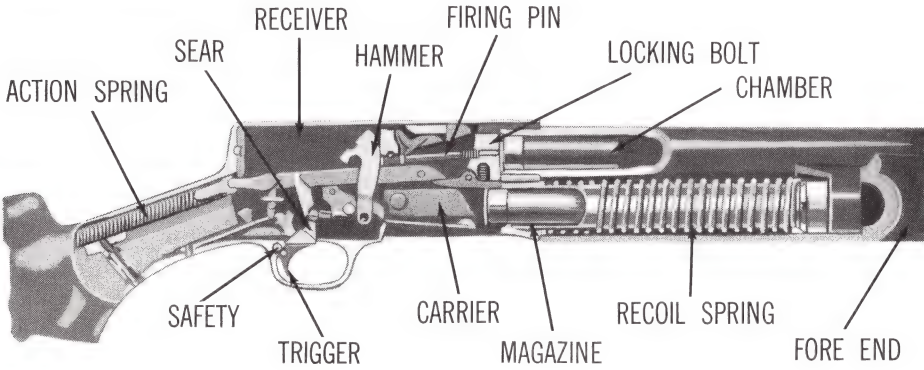
DOUBLE BARREL



PUMP



SEMI-AUTOMATIC



POSITION

The shotgun is fired from the standing position and at moving targets almost exclusively. The position used differs from the standing position with the rifle only in certain details—to make swinging the gun easier and to cut down the effect of recoil. The recoil is heavier than in the smallbore rifle, but not unpleasant.



The shooter should stand in an easy, relaxed position, with a little more weight on the left foot than the right (for the right-handed shooter) and the body leaning a little in the direction of the shot. It is almost as if the shooter had been standing still and then started to walk away—except that he stopped as soon as the left foot touched the ground. Position of the feet is important and even for the unexpected shot the shooter should take time to place his feet properly.

The left hand is held further forward than it is on the rifle in order to swing and control the gun. The buttplate is set well in on the shoulder and not allowed to slip out on the arm muscle since that would cause the recoil to be felt more strongly.

POINTING

The shotgun is not aimed like a rifle since that would be too slow in most cases. Because of the way it is to be used it is made to be pointed with the eye held a little above the top line of the barrel or rib. The shooter is only aware of the extreme end of the barrel since his attention is concentrated on the target.

LEAD AND SWING

While the shot charge flies many times the speed of the moving target, it is still necessary to “lead” the target to get hits. The lead to give can be fully learned only by experience. Learning is fast, though, when the following principals are followed:

The shooter’s own reaction time—the time his muscles take to fire the gun after he decides to fire—is much greater than the functioning time of the gun and the flight time of the shot charge. A lead of many yards ahead of the flying bird would be necessary if it had to include allowance for this reaction time. To avoid that, the gun is swung smoothly just under and ahead of the target, *and fired while still swinging*. The lead then has to be only enough to take care of the gun and ammunition time. Usually only a few target lengths of lead are then necessary. The apparent lead can be reduced even more by overtaking the target with the swing, carrying it through the target and firing as soon as the gun gets ahead. *But in any case, the swing must be continued smoothly while the gun is fired.* Checking the swing in the least will result in a miss behind.

THE HUNTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

SAFETY

The good hunter recognizes that he has a number of responsibilities when he goes afield for game. Much of this booklet is devoted to his responsibility in the matter of safe handling of hunting arms. Recognition of this responsibility and the practice of safety is the most important thing about the hunt. Even a near accident can ruin the pleasure a day's hunt could bring. An actual accident is many times worse. Every hunter should learn and observe safe hunting practices. He should also insist that they be observed by those with whom he hunts.

CLOTHING

The safe hunter will take care that his clothing makes it very difficult for other hunters to mistake him for game. Many states require the wearing of a warning color. For many years red has been worn as a "safe" color. Experiments are being made now, however, to see if there may be other colors which can be seen more readily. Experienced hunters and game wardens can advise the new hunter about different locales. It is particularly advisable for deer hunters to avoid white. Even the carrying of a white handkerchief is dangerous since it may be mistaken for a deer's tail.

GAME IDENTIFICATION

A good hunter will learn what game looks like in the field. Trips into the game field before hunting season will familiarize him with the game and how it looks in its natural surroundings. Such trips have beneficial by-products, too. When the season opens, the hunter knows the terrain and the local runways and habits of the game he is hunting.

OBSERVE LAWS

To be called a "sportsman" one must observe the rules of sportsmanship. A sportsman will observe both the spirit and the letter of the game laws. These laws are intended to protect his sport. He should familiarize himself with the game laws of the state in which he hunts. If possible, he should know and work with

the local game warden. Naturally, he will insist that his hunting companions observe game laws too. The game laws are set to help the hunter get his fair share of the game—not to penalize him.

EQUIPMENT

Only guns and ammunition in good condition should be taken into the field. In addition to food, water and suitable clothing, an experienced hunter will carry matches in a waterproof container, a hunting knife or hatchet, a compass and a map. A small first-aid kit is also desirable. These items are the bare minimum for the hunter who will be away from his camp all day. Local conditions and the weather will determine any additional items that should be carried.

ORIENTATION

One of the hazards of hunting for which the hunter should be prepared is getting lost. Prevention is the best cure. The hunter should, whenever possible, familiarize himself with the area where he plans to hunt before the season opens. Then he will not be in danger of losing his way. Unless he knows the area, he would be very wise to carry a map of the area and a compass. When he enters the area, it is well to note landmarks and keep a general idea of directions travelled.

If a hunter loses his way he should fire three shots in quick succession—this is the distress signal of hunters. For safety's sake, it is best to fire into a downed tree or rock-free earth. Anyone hearing this signal should reply with the same signal. The lost hunter should build a fire in some place where it can be controlled easily—green boughs will make smoke—and stay in one place. He definitely should *not* wander.

The man who hunts alone should tell someone the general area where he expects to hunt and approximately when he intends to return. The man who hunts alone also may have to depend entirely on himself to find his way out. He should conserve his strength at all cost. When he realizes he is lost he should stop and plan his way out. He should decide whether to stay where he is or to move on. And if he decides to move, he must then plan his route and anticipate the need for food, water and shelter.

dark. Here is the time he'll be glad he brought the map and compass—and noticed where he was from time to time on his way in.

One word of caution about compasses—they only tell direction, not their present location. It is necessary to learn how to use them.

COURTESY AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Every square foot of property in the United States belongs to someone. The hunter should always remember that he is the guest of the landowner on whose property he hunts. He should get the permission of the owner before he begins to hunt and respect his decision if permission is refused. Usually, consent is given if the farmer is assured that his property will not be harmed. The sportsman-hunter will always take great care not to break down fences, trample crops or injure stock. He will be careful to *leave all gates as he found them* and refrain from shooting near any houses or other buildings. His behavior will determine whether or not he is welcome to return. He must always act as he would expect *his* guests to act. Thoughtless and inconsiderate hunters are responsible for the thousands of acres surrounded by "No Hunting" signs.

An occasional hunter makes a nuisance of himself on so-called "public" property. The fact that lands, forests, picnic areas may be under the jurisdiction of some branch of government gives him the mistaken impression that he may destroy, leave litter, shoot things full of holes and that no one will care. He may even feel that since it is public property he has an equal ownership and has the right to do these things. No thinking person will do such things—especially will the hunter who calls himself "sportsman" avoid such things. No sportsman deliberately destroys property, public or private. Neither does he destroy the beauty of the countryside with cans, papers and other debris. He leaves his hunting and camping grounds, if possible, in better condition than he found them.

The hunter's courtesy should be extended to other hunters as well. Courtesy is a part of safety. The hunter that edges in on another in the hope of getting a shot at his misses is both discourteous and foolish. It causes haste in the shooter—and haste breeds

carelessness. There are many situations in which discourtesy and greed are the gateway to injury.

The use of alcohol while hunting can create many dangerous situations. "Drinks" and hunting just don't go together. Every hunter should heed this warning in consideration of his companions, himself and the cause of safe hunting.

FIRES

Forest fires and grass fires are a constant threat during some periods of the year. Every care should be taken to avoid them. Carelessness may cause the destruction of the habitat which the hunter's game needs to survive. The hunter careless enough to start a forest fire certainly could not be trusted with a gun.

Camp fires should be completely extinguished. Selection of the spot for the fire should be considered carefully in order to avoid starting underground fires in the roots of evergreens, leaves, cones, needles and other burnables. These should be cleared away from the fire location. Special precautions should be taken with candles in tents—and with gasoline and kerosene lanterns.

Hunters should refrain from smoking in the field or, at least, use special care in disposing of cigar and cigarette butts, pipe ashes and matches. Matches should be broken in half before dropping them.

BOW HUNTING SUPPLEMENT

A supplement to this handbook for those interested in bow hunting is available from the National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Price is 10¢.



Essentials of Safe Hunting

Faithful practice of the following essentials of safe hunting will prevent hunting accidents and make this old and honored sport a safer, more enjoyable one for everyone.

1. KNOW YOUR GUN

- Be sure the gun and ammunition are in good condition.
- Sight-in the gun before hunting with it.
- Learn to be a good shot.

2. HANDLE YOUR GUN PROPERLY

- Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
- Be sure of your target.
- Keep your finger out of the trigger guard until ready to fire.
- Practice self-control.
- Open the action and unload any gun which is not in use.
- Store hunting guns in a safe place.

3. FULFILL YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SAFE HUNTER

- Follow the rules of safe hunting.
- Learn to identify game.
- Know and observe the game laws.
- Be courteous.
- Conduct yourself so as to promote friendly hunter-landowner relations.
- Insist that your companions observe these same rules.

Available Instruction Materials

NRA Hunter Safety Instructor's Guide	\$.25
NRA Hunter Safety Bow Hunting Supplement .....	.10
NRA Basic Rifle Marksmanship .....	.25
NRA Basic Rifle Marksmanship Instructor's Guide .....	.25
NRA Basic Pistol Marksmanship .....	.25
NRA Basic Pistol Marksmanship Instructor's Guide .....	.25
Rifle Instruction Charts, 19" x 25", set	2.00
Pistol Instruction Charts, 19" x 25", set	2.00
Hunter Safety Instructor's Brassard .....	.50
Hunter Safety Student's Brassard .....	.25
Student Registration Card .....	.01
Student Identification Card .....	.01
Safety Posters, 14" x 22", set	1.00
Filmstrips With Instructor's Guide	
"The Gun"—Firearms Safety	5.00
"Rifle Shooting—Basic Instruction and The Prone Position"	5.00
Firearms Safety Presentation Outline	No Charge
Home Firearms Safety Leaflet	No Charge
Field Firearms Safety Leaflet	No Charge

Available Reference Material

Hunters Manual	\$.75
Shooting the .22 Rifle .....	.75
Pistol Marksmanship .....	.75
Reloading Information Vol. 1 & 2, each .....	.75
Simplified Small Arms Ballistics .....	.75
Fundamentals of Scope Sights .....	.75
NRA Junior Handbook .....	.25
NRA Smallbore Rifle Rules25
NRA High Power Rifle Rules25
NRA Pistol Rules25

Order from

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